Rousseau – *to write one's life*

"No one can write a man's life except himself. His inner way of being, his true life is known only to him; but in writing it, he disguises it; under the name of his life, he makes his apology; he shows himself as he wishes to be seen, but not at all as he is. The most sincere are truthful at best in what they say, but they lie by omission, and what they keep silent so changes what they pretend to admit, that by telling only part of the truth they say nothing at all.

I put Montaigne at the head of these falsely sincere men who want to deceive by telling the truth. He shows himself with faults, but he gives himself only charming ones; there is no man who does not have hateful ones. Montaigne paints a resemblance, but in profile. Who knows if some scar on the cheek or a hollow eye on the side he has hidden from us would not have completely changed his face?

A man more vain than Montaigne, but more sincere, is Cardan. Unfortunately, this same Cardan is so mad that one can draw no instruction from his reveries. Besides, who would want to go fishing for such rare instruction in ten folio volumes of extravagances?"